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THE HANS SACHS STAGE IN THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTHA

The stage of Hans Sachs has been the subject of two special studies, a short incomplete one by Anton Glock,¹ and more recently a very full one by Max Herrmann.² The latter attempts a detailed reconstruction of the stage on which plays of Hans Sachs were performed in the Church of St. Martha in Nürnberg, and this study of the same subject will consider first the validity of Herrmann's conclusions.

Any attempt to reconstruct the stage of an early period wholly or largely upon the basis of stage directions is attended with great difficulties and uncertainties. In the case of Hans Sachs there is the favorable circumstance that he not only wrote plays, but, at least in the decade from 1550 to 1560, directed master-singer performances of his own plays, and may well have had this dual relationship in mind in both text and stage directions of the plays written during these years. There is also the circumstance that the two chief places where his plays were performed are both preserved, probably much as they were in his time. These two places, the chief "theaters" of Nürnberg for many years, were the Church of St. Martha, which for almost a century following the Reformation was not used for church services, and the refectory of the Dominican Monastery. The refectory, a plain rectangular hall, about seventy-five feet long and twenty-six feet wide, offers no peculiar conditions to help even in determining the position of the stage, to say nothing of any aids to its reconstruction. Herrmann confines his reconstruction therefore to the stage of St. Martha, attempting to adapt to its particular conditions the stage directions of those plays of Hans Sachs which were written in or after the year 1550.

Before examining Herrmann's reconstruction it is desirable to consider his justification for interpreting Hans Sachs' stage directions so definitely and exclusively in terms of the conditions of St. Martha. His first justification is that suggested above—only St. Martha has conditions that might be helpful for such an

¹ *Die Bühne des Hans Sachs*. Passau, 1903. A Munich dissertation.

² *Forschungen zur deutschen Theatergeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*. Berlin, 1914.

attempt, but he says further (page 21): "It is the more permissible to take this place alone into account, since the archival sources give it first place; usually its use is granted by the city authorities, and so the arrangement of the play must be calculated to fit its conditions." What information pertinent to this point do the archives really give? The large number of archival notices pertaining to the drama³ is due to the fact that public dramatic performances required the permission of the city council. There is reason to believe that there were also at times other performances, of which we have no record, given in the private "Sing-schulen" of the mastersingers. A cursory glance through the archival notices from 1550 to Sach's death in 1576 shows that usually there were two companies each year performing plays of Hans Sachs during the "theater season," that this season was a comparatively short one, beginning generally at Candlemas (Feb. 2) and extending at the latest to the Sunday after Easter, that for the decade from 1550 to 1560 Hans Sachs appears almost every year as the leader of a company of players, that during the latter half of this decade and beyond it up to the year of the poet's death a certain Jörgen Frölich appears as leader of a company performing usually also plays of Hans Sachs. Examining more carefully the important decade from 1550 to 1560, we find in 1551 the first mention of permission to use St. Martha, granted however "because it had been used the year before." In the same year we see from other notices that Hans Sachs is giving plays. That his company is the one allowed the use of St. Martha is perhaps probable, but not certain. The archives show Hans Sachs giving plays in 1552 and 1554, with no indication of the place where they were given. There is no mention of master-singer plays in 1553 or 1555. In the season of 1556 we find for the first time clear evidence of the two companies, one directed by Hans Sachs and one by Jörgen Fröhlich, but with no mention of the places of performance. In 1557 we find the two companies again and learn definitely that Sachs is this year in the Dominican monastery and the knife-smiths under Frölich in St. Martha. In 1558 there are apparently the same two companies with no mention of places. In 1559 we find them again, with Frölich in St. Martha, and likewise in 1560, with Frölich again in St.

³ Published by Hampe. Theaterwesen in Nürnberg, 1900.

Martha. After 1560 Hans Sachs' name does not appear again as leader of a company.

From the archives then we find Frölich mentioned as being in St. Martha in 1557, 1559, and 1560 and we find also that in subsequent years he is practically always in this church, to which he seems to have had a sort of traditional claim. Hans Sachs is in the Dominican monastery in 1557. This is the only actual mention in the archives of the place of his performances. We may be perfectly sure however that he was in the monastery in 1559 and 1560, since we know that Frölich had St. Martha in these years. Furthermore, since Frölich practically always had St. Martha, it is entirely reasonable to assume that he had it and Sachs had the monastery in 1556 and 1558. So we see that for the last half of this decade, Sachs directed his plays apparently exclusively in the Dominican monastery. These are the very years, too, in which Sachs shows his greatest activity as a playwright. During the early part of the decade he may possibly have directed performances in St. Martha, although we have no definite knowledge of it. These facts and inferences from the archives connect Hans Sachs as a director of plays much more closely with the monastery stage than with that of St. Martha and are thus in direct conflict with the contrary assumption which underlies Herrmann's whole reconstruction attempt.

For the development of his stage reconstruction Herrmann has taken a single play, selected, as he states, somewhat at random from those written in or after 1550, and has made it the center of his study, analyzing it very fully and bringing in incidents and details from other plays only when they are needed. This makes his argument rest to a somewhat unnatural degree upon this one play, one out of almost a hundred written in the years following 1550, and makes it important to consider the probability of this particular play having been written with the St. Martha stage in mind. The play is *der huernen Sewfrid* of Sept. 14, 1557. Its composition falls thus a few months after the theatrical season of 1557, in which, as we have seen, the archives inform us definitely that Hans Sachs was giving his plays on the monastery stage, and it falls in the midst of the five-year period from 1556 to 1560, during which his connection was probably exclusively with the monastery. It seems therefore utterly unreasonable to assume that in this play, or, for that matter, in any of the fifty-seven

plays of this five-year period, the stage directions were made especially applicable to the stage conditions of St. Martha, where Frölich was giving plays of Sachs, and not to the conditions of the monastery stage, where Sachs was directing performances of his own plays. But to assume his directions applicable in a like degree to both stages is to take from them that very feature of special adaptation to the peculiar conditions of St. Martha upon which Herrmann bases his reconstruction.

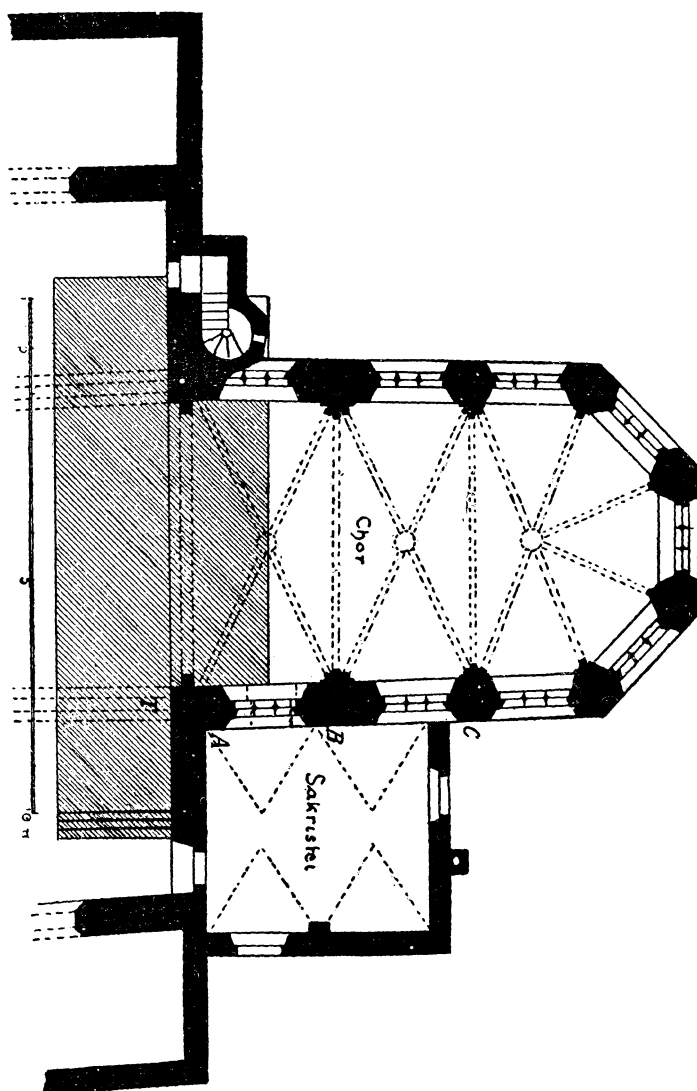
It may be pointed out further that there is reason to think that *der huernen Sewfrid* was not actually performed by either company, at least not in the few years intervening between its composition and the time when Hans Sachs ceased his activity as director. The notices in the archives unfortunately give only rarely the names of the plays performed. It seems significant, however, that all the plays that are mentioned as performed either by Hans Sachs's company or by the other company, about seven in all,⁴ are plays written in the months immediately preceding their performance, and this too despite the fact that the number of plays written in each year was much in excess of the number performed, and there were thus many earlier plays that had not been given. This seems to establish quite clearly the fact that each company had at this time the practice of giving each season a small selection, usually two it would seem, from the newest Hans Sachs plays, i.e., from those written since the last season. Now it happens that for the season following the writing of *der huernen Sewfrid*, that is, for the season of 1558, the archives inform us exceptionally well of the plays given. Hans Sachs is permitted to give "seine zwo gemachte Tragedien," King David and King Cyrus, but not to begin with them before Candlemas, while the other company is allowed to play Hans Sachs' *Kindheit Christi*, but not its second play *vonn der Kunigin zu Franckreich*. This

⁴ These are *Der abt im wildpad* (1550), *die unschuldig keyserin von Rom* (1551), possibly *Camilius* (1553), *die zerstörung zu Jerusalem* (1555), *die kindheit Christi* (1557), *König David* (1557), *König Cyrus* (1557), each performed in the "theater season" of the year following the dates here given, except that permission for the *abt im wildpad* was refused. Another play for which permission was refused was the comedy *vonn der kunigin zu Franckreich*, presented for approval by the other company in 1558. This was probably not a play of Hans Sachs. If it was one of his, it would have to be one of 1549 (cf. *Vierteljahrsschrift für Lit.-Gesch.* III, 38) and would be an exception to this rule.

seems to indicate pretty clearly that *der huernen Sewfrid* was not given by either company in 1558, and if the practice of giving only new plays was adhered to, *Sewfrid* was not given at all, at least not during the next few years, while the writing of new plays and Hans Sachs' activity as director continued. This deduction applies, to be sure, only to the annual public season. About private performances in the "Singschulen" we know nothing except the probability that there were such. It would, in my opinion, have been better, if Herrmann had centered his study about one of the plays that we know were actually performed.

In the discussion thus far a number of reasons have been given for thinking that Herrmann was not justified in his assumption that Hans Sachs wrote his plays chiefly for St. Martha and with its conditions immediately in mind. Let us turn now to St. Martha and its stage, and see how satisfactory and hence perhaps how probable Herrmann's reconstruction really is. The church of St. Martha has been renovated or altered three times since the sixteenth century. The exact nature of these renovations is not known. Herrmann assumes that besides the demonstrable closing up of a door between the choir and the sacristy, the changes have not affected the parts which he considers were used in staging the plays. These parts are the choir with the space immediately in front of it, and the adjoining sacristy with its doors, one leading into the choir and one into the nave. He undertakes to adapt to this space the requirements of Hans Sachs' plays and their stage directions. According to his reconstruction the stage proper, a raised platform, occupied the space shown in dark lines on the accompanying cut. In the rear was a curtain of two parts, affording an entrance in the middle where the parts came together. A second entrance was through the front sacristy door and up steps to the front part of the stage. The rear curtain was placed so as to come just in the middle of the door from the sacristy into the choir, thus establishing a connection behind the scenes between the sacristy and the rear of the choir, and at the same time affording a third entrance. This entrance however, owing to the height of the stage, was a low cavernous one, which Herrmann uses only for a few special purposes. Looking at this stage, the audience would see on its right a high pulpit and on its left, a choir-chair,⁵ both having, according to Herrmann, cer-

⁵ Herrmann assumes but one choir-chair, saying (page 48) that this was probably the case, because St. Martha was the church or chapel of a "Pil-



tain stage uses, and would see two side altars on the wall spaces to each side of the choir, these not serving any stage purpose.

The church features of this stage are very prominent, and they have given rise to certain doubts and questions in my mind. In the first place it seems to me a very fine and a questionable point to assume that the old mastersingers would hit upon the idea of placing the rear curtain so that it would just bisect the door between sacristy and choir. Suggestions that I shall make later would obviate any need of this. Then the two side altars. We know that these were about five feet high and about three and a half feet wide, as one of them is still preserved in the Germanic Museum of Nürnberg. Around these was built up the stage platform, having a height, Herrmann assumes, of 95 centimeters. The audience would see therefore on each side an altar, about three and a half feet wide, rising only about two feet above the floor of the stage, surely a squatty and objectionable feature. The pulpit too must have projected prominently into one side of this stage. Herrmann states that the pulpit of Hans Sachs' time was not the one in the church at present, but he assumes that it was in the same place, i.e., on the sacristy side at the corner where choir and nave meet, and that the steps led down from it towards the front sacristy door as they do at present. He says in explanation of the scene in *der huernen Sewfrid* where the dragon abducts Chrimhilt (page 44): Der Darsteller des Drachen war seit dem Anfang der Vorstellung auf der Kanzel verborgen, zeigte sich einen Augenblick oben, stieg . . . die Treppe der Kanzel herunter (*Er lest sich herab aus der lueft*), kam ungefähr neben der ersten Bühnenstufe (an der Sakristeitür) an." Herrmann seems to put the pulpit stairs just where one of the truncated side altars would rise above the stage floor. Herrmann's one choir-chair also offers some difficulty. This is a fixed chair and is therefore a fixed and permanent feature of his stage, playing an important part, especially as the seat of royalty. As his stage is raised eighty centimeters above the floor of the choir (ninety-five above the floor of the nave), he must assume that the

grims' Hospital." I have not been able to ascertain why this should limit the number to one. The following archival notice of 1590 speaks of chairs, i.e., choir-chairs, in the plural: *doch denjenigen, dies bei s. Martha halten werden, sagen, da sie etwas in der kirchen an den stuelen oder altarn zerprechen, dasselbig wider machen zu lassen.*

lone choir-chair stood on a small platform eighty centimeters high. This seems an unreasonable height in such a small choir. Its platform, with the steps leading up to it, would probably take about a third of the entire width of the choir, which was only six meters.

This reconstructed stage of Herrmann's has, as mentioned above, only two regular entrances, a middle rear one and a front side one. While the mastersingers, with their simple primitive methods of staging, could doubtless get along with two entrances if necessary, yet there are places in Hans Sachs' plays where at least a third entrance is very desirable, almost imperative, an entrance being needed from each side as well as from the rear. It seems the less probable that the Nürnberg mastersingers would limit themselves thus in the matter of entrances, in view of their familiarity with the stage of the school drama. The typical stage of the school drama had not only a number of curtain entrances to the *scenae* or "houses" in the rear, but also, at least in some cases, end or side entrances.⁶ The archival notices show, and it has been pointed out by Herrmann and others, that there was an interest in the school drama in Nürnberg in the forties and early fifties of the sixteenth century, thus overlapping somewhat the development of the mastersinger stage. Herrmann points out (page 15) that several of Hans Sachs' plays written in these years have in their manuscript form stage directions alluding to the *scenae* and were evidently intended for the school type of stage.⁷ He points out further that all these directions are missing in the first printed edition, which began to appear in 1558, and he explains this as being due to the fact that the stage with *scenae* was no longer used. This may well be true; the mastersingers may well have introduced changes suited to their purposes, but it does not seem reasonable to assume that they would give up any distinct advantages of a stage that they had once used, and such an advan-

⁶ Cf. Expeditus Schmidt, *Bühnenverhältnisse des deutschen Schul dramas*, p. 131, and cuts 7, 9, and 10 on pp. 192 and 193.

⁷ These interesting stage directions are found in three plays, *Griselda* (1546), *Hiob* (1547) and *Menechmi* (1548). Herrmann gives two or three not in Keller-Goetze, but omits two that are in Keller-Goetze: in *Griselda* (XXI, 352): *Nach dem get sie unter die zen mit irem vatter*, and in the title of *Menechmi* (XIII, 521): *mit 10 person zu spiln durch ein zena*. The use of the preposition *unter* in the one from *Griselda* is interesting.

tage would be a sufficient number of entrances to indicate clearly the action of the play.

Before supplementing this negative criticism with any positive suggestions as to the nature of the St. Martha stage, I should like to discuss two other conclusions of Herrmann, which, although resting directly upon his reconstructed stage, might, if valid, have an applicability independent of it. The most important of these is that the two expressions generally used in Hans Sachs' stage directions for the entrance of actors, *eingehen* and *kommen*, are used as technical terms with a distinction in meaning, *eingehen* indicating entrance in the rear, and *kommen* entrance in front through the sacristy door and up the steps. Herrmann's arguments may be summarized as follows: first, Hans Sachs uses as a rule only one expression (*abgehen*) for exits and hence there is no reason to think that the two terms for entrance are merely an esthetic variation of expression; second, assuming therefore a difference in meaning, Herrmann considers whether *eingehen* may not mean entrance to the empty stage and *kommen* mean coming to a group or "Bild" already on the stage, but he rejects this as having too many exceptions; third, he claims to find that the distinction of different entrances fits the action, although he admits exceptions. Here he emphasizes an extremely common situation in the plays, where the scene is in or before a king's castle, the curtain representing in a way the castle from which one *geht ein*, while one arriving from distant parts, "aus der Ferne," *kommt*.

To the natural question why Hans Sachs, the playwright-director, should indicate the places of entrance of the players and not the places of exit, Herrmann gives this answer (page 35): "Hans Sachsens Tendenz bei der Niederschrift ist nicht, Anweisungen zu geben, die der Schauspieler zu befolgen hat; . . . es ist auch nicht eigentlich der "Regisseur," der diese szenischen Bemerkungen für die Aufführung und ihre Einrichtung niederschreibt; wenn wir einen modernen Ausdruck anwenden wollen, sind sie vielmehr vom Standpunkt des "Inspizienten" aus zu verstehen. Der Dichter oder sein Vertreter steht hinter der Szene, um alles zu dirigieren und auch den Schauspielern im letzten Moment die nötigen Anweisungen zu geben, in der Hand eine besondere Abschrift des Stückes. . . . In ein solches Inspizientenexemplar, Hinweise über die Stelle einzutragen, an der

der Schauspieler abzugehen hat, wäre zwecklos . . .; dagegen war es sehr am Platze, die Auftrittsorte zu kennzeichnen, damit der Inspizient die Schauspieler am richtigen Platze hinausschieben konnte." This answer and in fact the whole theory seems to me forced and inherently improbable; furthermore, all the reasons already presented for doubting this stage reconstruction and for questioning the assumption of Hans Sachs' close relation to St. Martha all serve to throw doubts upon this particular theory. Nevertheless some answer seems desirable to the arguments advanced in its favor. The contention that the use of two terms for the entrance of actors and only one for their exit is a reason for assuming a distinction between the two does not seem convincing; it can be answered best perhaps by calling attention to the practice of some other dramatists. Hans Sachs' less known Nürnberg contemporary, Peter Probst, in his one comedy and seven Shrovetide plays, uses two terms, *eintreten* and *kommen* for entrance, and only one, *hinweggehen*, for exit, and no one could think of assuming a technical distinction here. Jakob Ayrer uses the same two terms for entrance and one for exit that Hans Sachs uses; no one has ever thought of reading any technical distinction into his terms for entrance, and Herrmann's particular distinction could not apply, as Ayrer's stage had doubtless more than two entrances. The same usage as in Hans Sachs is found in the "Pyramus-Thisbe" play of Damianus Türckis of about 1607.⁸ Here *eingehen* is clearly used for entrance to the empty stage and *kommen* for coming to a person or group already on the stage. Herrmann dismisses this interpretation of the two terms in Hans Sachs, as having too many exceptions. It seems to me important however to observe that this distinction rests upon the natural difference between *gehen* and *kommen* and serves no technical stage purpose; it may rest upon a rather vague feeling for this difference and many exceptions may occur without any special significance attaching to them; on the other hand Herrmann's theory assumes a purely artificial technical distinction for a definite stage purpose, and frequent exceptions, in fact one might say any exceptions at all, would invalidate it. If the "Inspizient" relies upon the *eingehen* and *kommen* to tell him at which entrance to "shove out" the players, the terms must surely be used correctly. In consideration of this, and also in view of the facts already

⁸ Stuttgarter Lit. Ver. Vol. 255.

adduced to show the improbability of the theory, it may well be claimed that the theory must fit the action of the plays very well indeed in order to establish its validity.

The number of plays from 1550 on is so great that it is impossible to present with any completeness the evidence as to how well this theory fits the plays. I may say that I have gone through all the plays⁹ with this and a few other points in mind, and have found so many places where the theory manifestly does not fit, that I have been forced to conclude from this test also that it is without foundation. Only a few examples can be given. In *König Cirus*, written in 1557 and performed by Hans Sachs' company in 1558, two attendants *gehen ein* in the second act and announce that the queen is about to give birth to a child, the rear curtain representing, as Herrmann would assume, the king's palace. They leave and Harpagus *geht ein* from the palace and announces the birth. Then the king *kommt* to Harpagus from the palace with the babe in his arms. This *kommt* does not fit Herrmann's theory, but it agrees with the natural tendency to use *kommen* for coming to someone already on the stage. Another exception in the same play is in Act IV when the attendants *gehen ein* and the king and Harpagus *kommen*, all from the same banquet hall. In *König Saul* (also of 1557) in the first act Samuel *geht ein* from his house and says:

Derhalb thet ich frü auffstehn,
Will könig Saul entgegen gehn.

Then Saul *geht ein*, evidently through a different entrance. In Act II Isay *geht ein* from his house and says to his three sons:

Dort kompt der prophet Samuel.

Samuel *geht ein*, naturally not through the same entrance as Isay. In Act VII David *geht ein*, coming however from distant parts, then Abimeleck *kommt*, apparently from his house, and says:

Wie kombst du her also von ferren.

⁹I have not been able to use the manuscript volumes that have been preserved; these should form the basis for the consideration of a question like this. It is a defect of the Keller-Goetze edition that it does not as a rule give the manuscript variants for the stage directions. A comparison however of the stage directions of the manuscript and the folio edition in cases where both have been published, i.e., in *der huernen Sewfrid* and in several comedies that Sachs lists with his Shrovetide plays as well as in all the regular Shrovetide plays themselves, shows practically no difference between the two in the use of *eingehen* and *kommen*, in *der huernen Sewfrid*, for instance, not a single difference.

This quite reverses the requirements of Herrmann's theory but fits the other tendency, Abimelech "comes" to David, who is already on the stage:

Herrmann's chief evidence for this theory of his consists in a detailed analysis of the use of *eingehen* and *kommen* in *der huernen Sewfrid*. He fits their use into his theory pretty well, but not without resort in places to assumptions that seem forced or too subtle for the sixteenth century stage. In Act I the smith and his helper *gehen ein* into the smithy, and Sewfrid, who comes from distant parts, *geht ein* also. To explain this Herrmann says (page 33): Eine solche (Schmiede) hat—wie der Zuschauer sich sagt—nur einen Eingang. Similarly he must assume that the Rosengarten (Act VI) has but one entrance, here the front entrance, as *kommt* is used for both Sewfrid and Dietrich, although it would be natural for them, coming to this meeting place for combat, to come from different directions, i.e., through different entrances. In a third similar case Herrmann assumes that the mountain (Act V) where the dragon keeps Crimhilt "has for those who cannot fly only one entrance"—here in the rear. So Crimhilt *geht ein* and likewise Sewfrid with his companions, but the dragon *kommt*, being able to fly. This is not only improbably subtle, it is not even logical; Crimhilt is not coming up the mountain, as Sewfrid is, she is living on it as a captive; she comes in from her "house" and hears Sewfrid approaching with the dwarf and giant, coming up, if you like, the one way that leads up the mountain but naturally entering by a different entrance from that of Crimhilt.

I have discussed this theory quite fully and aimed to show beyond any reasonable doubt its utter lack of probability, not only because of its importance, if valid, but also because Herrmann, assuming its validity, uses it in numerous other details of his attempt to reconstruct and visualize the staging of Hans Sachs' plays in St. Martha, and a rejection of it removes at least some of the support from these other contentions. It may be asked whether my conclusion is that Hans Sachs uses *eingehen* and *kommen* quite arbitrarily and without any distinction. A careful examination of his usage has convinced me that there is nothing back of his use of the two terms except a tendency, not at all consistently carried out, to use *eingehen* for entrance to the empty stage and *kommen* for coming to a person or group already on the stage. There would naturally be many accidental agree-

ments between this tendency and Herrmann's theory, for a person coming to one already on the stage would naturally in many cases come by another entrance, and these cases may have suggested the theory.

The most important of Herrmann's contentions that rest in part upon his assumption of a technical use of *eingehen* and *kommen* is a theory with regard to the position of the herald on the stage. The herald, in Hans Sachs' plays, not only speaks prolog and epilog but also very often takes part as a king's herald in the action. From the observation that the herald is often at hand to receive orders when his coming has not been mentioned, from the interpretation of certain places in *der huernen Sewfrid*, and from an application of his theory of *eingehen* and *kommen*, Herrmann concludes that in all scenes where the herald needs to be at hand, therefore chiefly at the court of kings, he has his position on the steps leading from the front sacristy door to the stage, and stands here close to the wall, so that players entering can pass in front of him. Here he remains, according to Herrmann, during the greater part of the performance, visible to the spectators, belonging half to the real world, half to the imaginary world of the drama, the steps on which he stands forming the bridge between these two worlds: *Kunstraum und realer Raum gehen hier ineinander über*. This is a very pretty theory, but in my opinion not convincingly established by Herrmann and altogether improbable. The very questionable nature of his reconstructed stage with its stairs by the sacristy door and of his theory of *eingehen* and *kommen* throws of itself serious doubt upon this view of the position of the herald. However there remains the fact of the herald's being so often at hand without his coming being mentioned, a fact which might suggest some more or less permanent position of the herald on the stage. These cases admit however of an explanation which seems to me simpler and more natural. In these cases, practically without exception, the king is also on the stage, in fact we know of the herald's presence through some order of the king addressed to him. I feel sure that in these cases the herald has entered with the king, just as in countless cases where his entry with the king is expressly mentioned. His regular role, aside from prolog and epilog speaker, being that of a king's herald, he is the natural attendant of the king, coming in with him and having his position near the king's

chair or throne, for Hans Sachs' kings are practically always seated while on the stage. In *Darius* the entrance of the herald as an attendant of the king is expressly mentioned every time that the king enters, although he neither speaks a word nor has a word addressed to him throughout the play. Similarly in *der gantz Passio* in Act VII King Herod *geht ein mit ernholdt und seim hoffgesindt*, although the herald takes no part in the further action of the scene. Usually however the entry of the herald with the king is mentioned only when he has some slight role to play. What would be more natural than to neglect occasionally to mention his entry even when later some command is to be addressed to him, or forget to mention his leaving the stage again with the king. Such neglect to mention entry and exit may be found occasionally in the case of other minor characters; Cleopatra *geht ein*, no attendants are mentioned, but a moment later she gives a command to a *hoffrau*, in King Iszboset and in perhaps a half dozen other plays, body attendants evidently enter unmentioned with some person of rank, for commands are later given to them. This natural explanation of the presence of the herald will account for all the cases mentioned by Herrmann (pages 40, 41) in trying to establish his theory, with the possible exception of the somewhat unclear situation in the Rosengarten scene of *der huernen Sewfrid*.

Having attempted thus far to show the improbability of Herrmann's stage reconstruction and of certain other conclusions based upon it, it remains to be considered whether anything positive, any other type of stage, can be suggested as more probable. Any reconstruction as complete and detailed as that undertaken by Herrmann is, I consider, quite impossible. His attempt to use for this purpose the particular conditions and church features of St. Martha cannot be called successful and I do not think it probable that these features were used. As a result it is, in my opinion, altogether probable that the stage in St. Martha did not differ essentially from that in the refectory of the Dominican Monastery, a stage of which the general character is reasonably clear from Hans Sachs' plays and their stage directions, but of which many details are obscure. Its general features have been given by Kaulfusz-Diesch¹⁰ and others: a raised stage of a neutral character representing any scene; a rear curtain or partition,

¹⁰ Die Inszenierung des deutschen Dramas an der Wende des sechzenten und siebzehnten Jahrhunderts, Leipzig, 1905.

high enough to conceal the players, but not extending to the ceiling; no front curtain; no scenery; at least two entrances¹¹; a small part of the stage floor removable, making a hole or "loch"; a throne or royal seat, probably a fixed feature always on the stage; a few movable requisites brought on from time to time as the action requires them. Whether this stage was enclosed on three sides, i.e., on sides and rear, or only in the rear, is not certain. The Terentian type of school drama stage seems to have had only rear curtains. On the other hand side curtains are clearly shown in a number of the interesting illustrations to Rasser's school drama *Kinderzucht* of 1574.¹²

The most probable location for this stage in St. Martha would seem to be in the middle of the front side, as Herrmann has placed his, but farther forward, so that the rear curtain would come in front of the whole choir. One advantage of this location would be that it would remove the stage from the disturbing altars, choir-chairs, etc., and conceal these features almost entirely from sight. Another would be that the stage would be a regular rectangular platform, such as seems to have been usually the case, whereas Herrmann's platform had to be built around and fitted more or less to side altars, pulpit stairs, and choir-chair. A third advantage is that it permits of an entrance on each side of the stage, something not provided for in Herrmann's reconstruction and yet desirable for several of Hans Sachs' plays. An instance is *Abraham*, where, at the beginning of Act II, Abraham *geht ein, setzt sich zu der thür; der Herr kommt mit zweyen Engeln*, not coming to Abraham's house, but on his way, as he explains, to investigate the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah; *sie* (the Lord and angels) *thun samb wollen sie gehen*, i.e., continue their journey, *Abraham stellet sich für den Herrn* and implores him to spare the righteous, however few, in these cities. This scene could not well be given on Herrmann's stage, as it evidently needs three entrances. The door to Abraham's house would most probably be in the middle of the rear, and the other two entrances at the sides. If we assume

¹¹ I know of no foundation for Kaulfusz-Diesch's definite statement (p. 205) that the mastersinger drama got along with an entrance on one side and an exit on the other side of the stage.

¹² Some of these are reproduced by Bolte in the introduction to vol. VI of his edition of Wickram's works (Stuttg. Lit. Ver. vol. 236), others in an article by Schwabe in *Neue Jahrbücher f. d. Klass., Altertum, Gesch.* etc. Vol. XXX (1912), p. 196.

that the stage platform had considerable width and not much depth (and this is the shape of the stage in the illustrations to Rasser's *Kinderzucht*), the side entrances could be through curtain doors at the ends of the rear curtain, or around these ends as indicated in some of the old Terentian illustrations (see Exp. Schmidt, p. 189 ff.), or, if there were side curtains, possibly through these, although in this case it would be necessary, or at least desirable, to have further curtains on the sides arranged so as to hide the players from the view of the audience until they have entered. In general in the matter of entrance, if we think how easy it was to provide them by means of curtains and remember that the *scenae*, or "houses" of the school drama, each with its curtain door, were familiar to the mastersingers, it seems reasonable to assume for any play, the number of entrances that its action seems to call for.

Herrmann's stage in St. Martha has, in common with the more usual type of mastersinger stage, its "loch" or hole that could be made in the stage floor by removing a small section of it. Herrmann assumes the use of the "loch" for the fishing scene in *Cleopatra* and for the scene in *der huernen Sewfrid* where Sewfrid pushes the giant and a moment later the dragon down the mountain. Herrmann's reconstruction has however, as we have seen, still another opening, the bisected door between sacristy and choir, shortened by the height of the stage, thus forming a somewhat cave-like entrance, some three and a half or four feet high. This Herrmann uses for the dragon's cave in *der huernen Sewfrid*, for the lion's den as well as for the fiery furnace in *Daniel* and for a few other similar purposes. How are these scenes to be staged on the type of stage that I am suggesting for St. Martha. The natural assumption is that the "loch" was used also for these scenes. We know that on the stage of Jakob Ayler, the Nürnberg dramatist who was much influenced by Hans Sachs, the "loch" was often used for just such purposes. By making the stage about four feet high, a little greater height than that assumed by Herrmann, and increasing the resulting depth of the hole still more, if necessary, by some box-like stage requisite in front of the opening, the "loch" would make a fairly good dragon's or lion's cave, and, with the box-like requisite and smoke rising from below, would make a better fiery furnace than Herrmann's sacristy and abbreviated door. There are a few indications that

seem to point to a tradition of a rather high stage in the sixteenth century. The chronicle of Dietrich Westhof tells of plays in Dortmund in 1554, performed in front of the new school. "und die hogede daruf gespilt wort, was nicht hoger, als einem manne an die borst und als eine halve wijnkope hoge." (Exp. Schmidt, p. 48.) This is expressed as if the chronicler thought that "breast high" was unusually low for a stage. In a number of the illustrations to Rasser's *Kindertzucht*, spectators are standing close up to the stage which comes to their breast. In one illustration a spectator has even climbed a tree for the evident purpose of getting a better view. One of the living pictures reproduced by Herrmann (page 395) shows the stage-like platform with a height of about four feet.

One of the minor points mentioned by Herrmann (page 21) in trying to establish his reconstruction is an archival notice of 1591, quite a while, to be sure, after Hans Sachs' death, in which permission is given to use St. Martha: *doch denjenigen, dies bei s. Martha halten werden, sagen, da sie etwas in der kirchen an den stuelen oder altarn zerprechen, dasselbig wider machen zu lassen.* To this Herrmann says, "An den Chorstühlen oder Altären kann nur der etwas zerbrechen, der oben im Altarraum agiert." But the location that I suggest which places the choir and the side altars behind the scenes surely exposes them to as great or even greater danger of being injured.

Herrmann's reconstruction of the St. Martha stage, to the criticism of which much of this article has been devoted, is only the first of three long chapters devoted to a study of the Hans Sachs stage. The second and third chapters consider decoration and stage requisites, costumes and the art of acting. His study of stage requisites is based to such a degree upon his reconstructed St. Martha stage and his theory of the technical meaning of *ein-gehen* and *kommen* that its value is much impaired, if we do not accept his views on these points. His treatment of the other subjects of these chapters is in the nature of the case more independent of a particular type of stage and his discussion offers much of interest and value, which does not however come within the scope of this article.

In conclusion the results of this study may be summed up as follows: first, the reconstruction of the St. Martha stage that Herrmann has offered cannot be accepted as probable, being

not only open to objection in various details but being based upon a fundamentally wrong assumption of Hans Sachs' relation to the St. Martha stage; second, the stage in St. Martha was probably quite independent of the special church features of the place and not essentially different from the other Hans Sachs stage in the Dominican monastery, a stage reconstructable only in a very general way, upon the basis of Hans Sachs' stage direction; third, the most natural and probable place for this stage in St. Martha was just in front of the choir, permitting of entrances on either side and leaving the choir and sacristy available for various "behind-the-scenes" purposes.

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